

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THE FLU TAKING SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS GOES A LONG WAY

ACCORDING TO Bloomington Public Health, most people who catch the flu feel sick, but generally get better in about a week. Young children, people older than 65 years of age, pregnant women and those with chronic medical conditions can have serious complications from the flu. These complications may include pneumonia and worsening of medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes or asthma.

The Center for Disease Control is still learning about the severity of the novel H1N1 flu virus. So far, the largest numbers of confirmed and probable cases of H1N1 have occurred in people between the ages of 5 and 24 years old. Pregnancy and other previously recognized high risk medical conditions from seasonal influenza appear to be associated with increased risk of complications from the H1N1 flu virus.

What can you do to protect yourself?

- Get a flu vaccination every year. (The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against the H1N1 virus.)
- Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water.
- Clean your hands before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- People with an underlying medical condition, pregnant women, young children (especially under age two), and people 65 or older should contact their health care providers if they have flu symptoms or have been exposed to people with the flu.

For more information, call Public Health's Karen Stanley at 952-563-8990 or Lisa Brodsky at 952-563-4962.



FLU SHOT CLINIC

If you missed the flu shot clinic held in Bloomington last month, there are more opportunities to get vaccinated. Community flu shot clinics will be held **Wednesday, October 21, 1 - 2:30 p.m.**, at Richfield Community Center, 7000 Nicollet Avenue in Richfield and **Thursday, October 29, 9 - 11 a.m.**, at the Edina Senior Center, 5280 Grandview Square in Edina.

Cost for the flu shot is \$25.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: FLU SHOT.

FAMILY DIALOGUE RULES DINNERTIME ISN'T JUST FOR EATING

IF YOU THOUGHT EATING was the most important reason to have family dinners, this could change your mind:

More than a decade of research has found that the more kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

Family meals are the perfect time to talk to your kids and listen to what's on their minds. However, Bloomington Public Health knows that those conversations can be difficult to begin. To help get the conversation started, Public

Health created "Let's Talk" Tins that contain questions both serious and silly, yet suitable for all ages.

Conversation tips:

- Listen when your teen is ready to talk.
- Show respect for your child's feelings and experiences.
- Don't interrupt.
- Ask open-ended, not "yes" or "no," questions.



"Let's Talk" Tins can be purchased for \$5 at Bloomington Public Health, 1900 West Old Shakopee Road. For more information, visit www.tricitypartners.org or call Public Health at 952-563-8984.



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PARENTS HAVE THE POWER CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUR TEEN

EVERY PARENT WANTS their child to reach their full potential. Early alcohol or drug use could prevent them from doing just that, but there is hope. Research has found that parents wield the greatest influence over their child's temptation to use drugs and alcohol.

According to Minnesota Student Survey data, alcohol and marijuana are the top two substances used by youth in Bloomington. If used before age 15, these youth are four times more likely to have substance abuse issues later in life. Lasting harm to thinking ability may result because the human brain is not fully developed until age 25. Remember, healthy parental involvement is imperative.

KEEPING YOUR FAMILY SAFE

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS BLOCK PARTIES STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS

THE 26TH ANNUAL National Night Out (NNO) proved to be another successful event. Nearly 360 block parties registered. Many parties were visited by Bloomington Police and Fire Departments, and Allina Hospitals and Clinics.

Pat Hanf of 10th Avenue Circle has been block captain on her street since she moved in 10 years ago. She started the neighborhood watch group because she wanted to get to know her neighbors.

"When you know your neighbors, it creates a sense of security and awareness," Hanf said. We all watch out for each other."

NNO is the biggest one-day fundraising event of the year for Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP). This year, VEAP collected nearly 20,000 pounds of food donations and \$742 from 242 block parties. VEAP Development Director Karin Meier credits Crime Prevention Specialist Niki Pierson, who organizes the NNO events, with VEAP's NNO success.

The Bloomington Crime Prevention Association also raised \$7,000 for the Bloomington Police Department to help offset expenses from the event.



Mayor Winstead and Police Chief Jeffrey Potts pose with Block Captains Pat Hanf and Mary Chapman.

National Night Out is designed to heighten awareness of crime and drug prevention, generate support for local anti-crime programs and strengthen neighborhood spirit. For more information, call Niki Pierson at 952-563-8808.

A REAL BLOOMINGTON HERO FIGHTING FIRES IS A PRIORITY FOR VOLUNTEER

AT THE END OF THE DAY, Bloomington volunteer firefighter Ryan Petersen has one goal in mind – get everyone home safely to their families. This includes not only the people he helps on calls, but also the firefighters he works with and considers extended family.

A volunteer firefighter for eight years and a Bloomington native, Petersen said protecting the people in his community is the most rewarding part of his job. He also feels a great sense of responsibility to his country. A member of the Marine Corps, Petersen did two 10-month-long stints in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. While he was in Iraq, his "extended family" planned a surprise for him.

"The most memorable moment of my life was when some firefighters remodeled my house for me without my knowing," Petersen said.

Petersen, who also works full-time as a Fire Range Technician for the Minnesota Fish and Wildlife Service, said he's had his share of close calls.

"The scariest part of this job is when we're on the highway responding to a motor vehicle accident or fire," Petersen said. "The traffic is just flying by and we have to make sure we keep a safe distance from it while we're working."

Petersen said that when he isn't on the job he enjoys hunting, fishing and doing projects around his house.

